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SATURDAY, JULY 5, 2025

HISTORY

latimes.com

perilous

His support for GOP megabill comes with political risk. He says his district benefits.

BY SEEMA MEHTA

Already a ripe target for Democrats in the next election, Central Valley Rep. David Valadao put his political future in deeper peril this week by voting in favor of legislation that slashes the Medicaid coverage essential to roughly two-thirds of his constituents.

The Republican dairy farmer from Hanford said that despite his concerns about President Trump's megabill, he voted to support it because of concessions he helped negotiate that will help his district, such as an additional \$25 billion for rural hospitals, \$1 billion for Western water infrastructure, and agricultural investments.

More than half a million residents in Valadao's district are covered by the program known in California as Medi-Cal — the most of any district in the state — according to the UC Berkeley Labor Center. While preserving tax breaks benefiting the wealthy, the bill passed by narrow Republican majorities in both the House and Senate will reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$104 trillion over 10 years, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Valadao said his constituents will directly benefit from several provisions in the legislation, including the extension of the tax breaks, the elimination of taxes on tips and overtime, and the expansion of the child tax credit.

"These are real wins that will put more money back in the pockets of hardworking families throughout the Valley," he said. "No piece of legislation is perfect, but this bill ultimately reflects the priorities of [my district] — lower taxes, stronger farms, better infrastructure, and a commitment to protecting access to healthcare for Val-

[See Valadao, A11]



THOUSANDS OF ANGELENOES staged a peaceful demonstration outside City Hall on the Fourth of July.

July Fourth protest in L.A. fights ICE raids, budget bill

BY ALENE
TCHEKMEDYIAN

Lawrence Herrera started carrying a folded-up copy of his birth certificate in his wallet last week. He also saved a picture of his passport on his phone's camera roll.

For the 67-year-old Atwater Village resident who was born and raised here,

the precaution felt silly. But he's not taking any chances.

"I started hearing, 'He's taking anyone and everyone,'" Herrera said, referring to President Trump's immigration crackdown. "I thought, 'You know what? That could be me.'

Herrera was one of hundreds of protesters who spent Fourth of July in downtown Los Angeles to rally against the immigra-

tion raids that have roiled the region and the surge in federal funding approved this week to keep them going. Many on the street said they were skipping the barbecues and fireworks this year. Instead, they showed up at City Hall, some in costumes or wrapped in flags. A 15-foot balloon of Trump in a Russian military uniform sat in Grand Park.

Erica Ortiz, 49, was

dressed as Lady Liberty in shackles. Herrera wore a Revolutionary War outfit covered in anti-Trump pins that he said was appropriate for the occasion.

"Guess what? We have no independence right now," he said. "That's why we're out here."

They marched through Olvera Street and outside the Federal Building, which [See Protest, A7]

ANALYSIS

Israel and Iran are in a 'time-out'

Ceasefire has been holding, but an expert warns conflict is unresolved

BY NABIH BULOS

BEIRUT — After a hastily cobbled together ceasefire between Israel and Iran took hold June 24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu jubilantly declared that the "existential threats" of Iran's nuclear

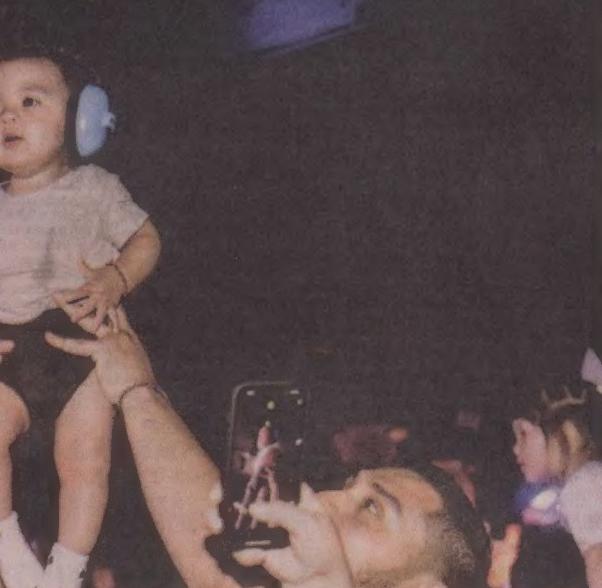
program and ballistic missile arsenal had been destroyed. The "historic victory," he said, would "abide for generations."

But nearly two weeks after President Trump deployed 30,000-pound bombs and Tomahawk missiles against Iran's nuclear facilities, questions linger over

how abiding that victory will prove to be. Even as U.S. and Israeli intelligence services continue assessing the strikes, and the White House insists Tehran may acquiesce to a grand bargain for peace in the region, analysts say the hostilities were less a finale than a prelude to the next act.

"There will be a sequel. The war remains an unfinished project, for both sides," said Bader Al-Saif, a professor of history at Kuwait University. Israel, he added, "wants to see the end of the Iranian regime or a more serious decapitation of its capabilities."

[See Analysis, A4]



ELIZABETH WEINBERG For The Times

A TODDLER in the crowd at Lenny Pearce's kid-friendly EDM show at the Roxy.

Baby's first rave? Inside a wild party

By LYNDI LIN GRIGSBY

Natalie Z. Briones is a concert veteran. She's been to heavy metal shows and a punk music festival where she napped most of the time. On Sunday, she attended her first baby rave.

Natalie is a few months shy of 2. In the arms of her dad, Alvin Briones, 36, the pigtailed toddler squealed "Hi!" to anyone passing by the Roxy Theatre in West Hollywood where the Briones family was lined up to meet Lenny Pearce, the

mastermind behind Natalie's favorite song, "The Wheels on the Bus."

It's not the classic version most parents sing while slowly swaying and clapping — Pearce's rendition rages with enough bass to rattle rib cages. Natalie is here for it, and so is her mom, Alondra Briones, who plays the techno remix during her drives to work even without Natalie in the backseat.

"It's a pick-me-up," said Alondra, 28, from Compton, before filing into the theater with other parents and care-

[See Baby rave, A14]

[See Asbestos, A7]

Crews dumped asbestos waste at landfills

Federal contractors improperly shipped wildfire debris, state and local records say.

BY TONY BRISCOE

Federal contractors tasked with clearing ash and debris from the Eaton and Palisades wildfires improperly sent truckloads of asbestos-tainted waste to non-hazardous landfills, including one where workers were not wearing respiratory protection, according to state and local records.

From Feb. 28 to March 24, federal cleanup crews gathered up wreckage from six burned-down homes as part of the wildfire recovery efforts led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its primary contractor Environmental Chemical Corp.

However, prior to reviewing mandated tests for asbestos, crews loaded the fire debris onto dump trucks bound for Simi Valley Landfill and Recycling Center, and possibly Calabasas Landfill in unincorporated Agoura and Sunshine Canyon Landfill in Los Angeles' Sylmar neighborhood, according to reports by the California Office of Emergency Services and Ventura County.

Later on, federal contractors learned those tests determined that the fire debris from these homes contained asbestos, a fire-resistant building material made up of durable threadlike fibers that can cause serious lung damage if inhaled.

The incident wasn't reported to landfill operators or environmental regulators until weeks later in mid-April.

Many Southern California residents and environmental groups had already objected to sending wildfire ash and debris to local landfills that were not designed to handle high levels of contaminants and potentially hazardous waste that are often commingled in wildfire debris. They feared toxic substances — including lead and asbestos — could pose a risk to municipal landfill workers and might even drift into nearby communities as airborne dust.

The botched asbestos disposal amplifies those concerns and illustrates that in some cases federal contractors are failing to adhere to hazardous waste protocols.

"You have to wonder if they caught it here, how many times didn't they catch it?" asked Jane Williams, executive director of the nonprofit California Communities Against Toxics. "It's the continued failure to effectively protect the public from the ash. This is further evidence of that failure. This is us deciding those who work and live around

CALIFORNIA

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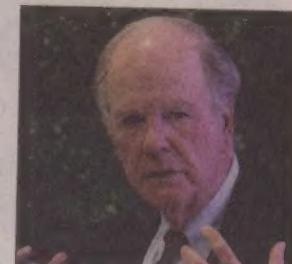


MORE THAN 130 firefighters battled a blaze with exploding fireworks that engulfed four homes in Pacoima.

Sudden exit of sheriff oversight chair exposes rift

Watchdogs say efforts to bring reforms to the department are being stymied.

BY CONNOR SHEETS

GENARO MOLINA L.A. Times
ROBERT BONNER no longer heads the Civilian Oversight Commission.

When a top official responsible for oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department announced recently that he is being forced out of his position, it brought to a fever pitch tensions that had been building for months.

On one side are watchdogs who say efforts to bring reforms and transparency to the Sheriff's Department are being stymied. On the other are county officials who say fresh perspectives are needed on the Civilian Oversight Commission.

The showdown is playing out as the commission continues fighting the county for access to internal Sheriff's Department records on deputy misconduct, including investigations into gang-like cliques said to rule over certain stations and promote a culture of violence.

Robert Bonner, the oversight commission chair, wrote in a letter last month that he was "involuntarily leaving" the body he has been a member of since its founding in 2016. Bonner, 83, said in an interview that he was chairing the commission's May meeting at the L.A. County Hall of Records when he unexpectedly received a letter from County Supervisor Kathryn Barger stating that she would be appointing someone to replace him.

One man was later found dead. Authorities have not released any details about him or the woman who was critically injured, but neighbors said the two were family members.

One neighbor, Jacob Gonzalez, told NBC-LA that he had rushed to one of the burning homes, and "when I arrived, that's when I saw the burn victim."

[See Pacoima, B4]

Bonner said he was "still surprised" that he had been dismissed without so much as a phone call from Supervisor Barger.

And he had choice words for other county operators that he described as thorns in the commission's side.

"It can be treacherous. The county bureaucrats — and this includes, by the way, the county counsel's office — they guard their turf and see an independent commission as a threat to that turf," Bonner said.

"There are forces within the county," he added later, "that do not want to see real, effective and meaningful oversight over the Sheriff's Department."

Helen Chavez, a spokesperson for Barger, said in an email that Bonner's claims that the supervisor summarily dismissed him were made "for dramatic effect" and "are not only inaccurate but also mischaracterize the circumstances of his departure" from the commission.

"His assertion that his presence alone was essential to achieving reforms is both self-serving and dismissive of the dedicated Commissioners and staff who are collectively advancing the Civilian Oversight Commission's mission," the statement said. "These reforms are big."

[See Commission, B5]

Pacoima fireworks explosion kills man, burns four homes

BY ROSANNA XIA AND CLARA HARTER

With fireworks actively exploding amid an eerie tower of smoke visible from miles away, more than 130 firefighters rushed to put out a major fire Thursday night in Pacoima that engulfed four homes, left one man dead and displaced more than a dozen people.

Neighbors reportedly had to help rescue at least one person through a window in this quiet residential area of West Corcoran Street, fire authorities said, and one woman was burned so severely that she had to be transported to the hospital in critical condition.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. Neighbors reported hearing at least one and possibly two massive firework explosions shortly after 9 p.m. on the eve of the Fourth of July, before they noticed flames engulfing a nearby house.

Videos captured by neighbors and news helicopters showed fireworks actively detonating while crews from the Los Angeles Fire Department fought to contain the blaze from spreading and igniting more homes nearby. The firefighters had to attack the flames in a defensive mode at first, stationing themselves from a safe-enough distance in case of additional explosions.

By 9:30 p.m., the Fire Department had declared the blaze a "major emergency," and arson and hazmat teams, as well as the Los Angeles Police Department's bomb squad, were dispatched to the incident.

It is unclear whether the explosion happened first or the fire happened first and caused the explosion, but this fire had obvious fueling," said LAFD Public Information Officer David Ortiz, who was still working at the scene Friday morning.

"Pyrotechnics, fireworks — they were seen exploding and raining down on this neighborhood."

Firefighters were able to knock down the fire at 10 p.m., by which point it had

spread to a fourth home, two accessory dwelling units and a car, according to the LAFD. A woman in her mid-30s had to be transported to a hospital in critical condition, and an injured dog was also taken to an emergency veterinary hospital.

One man was later found dead. Authorities have not released any details about him or the woman who was critically injured, but neighbors said the two were family members.

One neighbor, Jacob Gonzalez, told NBC-LA that he had rushed to one of the burning homes, and "when I arrived, that's when I saw the burn victim."

[See Pacoima, B4]

Activist who aided protesters is indicted

He faces conspiracy charges after handing out face shields at an anti-ICE rally in June.

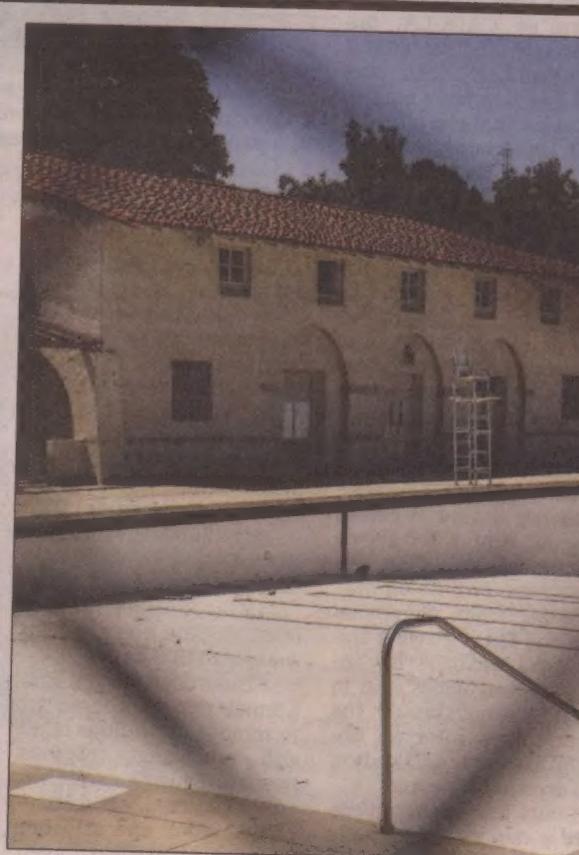
BY JAMES QUEALLY

A local activist who handed out protective face shields to protesters last month during demonstrations against the Trump administration's chaotic immigration raids was indicted by a federal grand jury Wednesday.

Alejandro Orellana, a 29-year-old member of the Boyle Heights-based community organization Centro CSO, faces charges of con-



Dick Whittington Studio / Corbis



CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS Los Angeles Times

THE HISTORIC Griffith Park Pool was built in 1927 and was once the largest aquatic facility in L.A. It's been dry since 2020, and will be replaced by a smaller pool and a splash pad due to its severely cracked foundation.

Harris tops poll for next governor

BY SEEMA MEHTA

Former Vice President Kamala Harris hasn't decided whether she will run for California governor next year, but a poll released Wednesday shows that she would be a favorite of voters if she does.

Though many voters were undecided, Harris was the choice of 41% of survey respondents, compared with 29% who opted for an unnamed Republican candidate, according to a poll by UC Irvine. She also had the greatest favorability ratings and is most well-known

Bass drops, glow sticks — and youngsters

[Baby rave, from A1]
givers for an afternoon rager with their kids.

In Pearce's remixes of classic children's music, an unexpected subgenre is taking off — toddler techno — which melds the cloyingly sweet lyrics of songs like "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" with the edgy beat drops associated with music from gritty warehouse parties.

The unlikely musical pairing creates a bridge between parents like Sandra Mikhail and her 6-year-old daughter, Mila. Both dressed in fuchsia at Pearce's dance party; the mother-daughter duo were there to celebrate Mila's promotion from kindergarten. In their Riverside home, Pearce's music is on heavy rotation.

"I can handle kids' music now," said Sandra, 38. "With the beat and [Pearce] adding that techno touch to it, it makes me able to tolerate listening to it all day long."

For the last year, Pearce has been hosting sold-out dance parties boldly called baby raves — first in his native Australia — then on the first leg of his U.S. tour, which culminated in a June 29 double-header at the Roxy.

In the afternoon show timed for that sweet spot many parents know well — post-nap and right before the evening witching hours — Pearce pranced, high-fived kids and waved at babies being hoisted in the air.

At 34, he's been an entertainer for most of his life. Over a decade ago, he was dancing in music videos as a member of the Australian boy band Justice Crew. Now, he's firmly affixed in his dad era. His dance partner is now a large balloon spider named Incy Wincy.

"I'm just being a dad onstage," said Pearce in a video interview from New York. "I can make a clown of myself to entertain kids."

From boy band to toddler techno

Pearce's journey into children's entertainment seemed preordained, if only because his identical twin brother is arguably the second most famous purple character on a children's TV show (behind Barney, of course).

"We're both in the toddler scene," said John Pearce, the older twin by minutes, who in 2021 joined "The Wiggles" cast as the Purple Wiggle. "[My brother's] stuck with it for a long time, and it's all paid off now."

At the Roxy, many parents and caregivers said they found Pearce through the Purple Wiggle. Others discovered him on social media: He has more than 2 mil-

lion followers on TikTok and more than 1 million followers on Instagram.

Before becoming children's entertainers, the Pearce brothers were members of Justice Crew, a dance troupe that won "Australia's Got Talent" in 2010. For a few years, the boy band's future burned white hot with the aspiration to break through in the U.S. — a dream that never materialized.

Most boy bands have a finite time in the spotlight, said Pearce. In 2016, he quit Justice Crew to focus on DJing and music production, but the transition from boy band to toddler techno didn't happen overnight. For a time, he worked as a salesperson at an Australian electronic store.

"People were like, 'Aren't you from Justice Crew?'" he said. "And I'm like, 'Yeah. Now, do you want this lens with that camera?'"

In 2022, becoming a dad to his daughter Mila changed the course of his creativity. Pearce started

remixing children's songs with "ravey" music and filming himself dancing with her to the songs.

Soon, other parents started sharing videos of their kids dancing to his songs too. In this way, social media allows for ideas to be refined until something sticks.

In March, Pearce released his first solo album, aptly titled "Toddler Techno."

All along the way, he imagined playing these songs at mini raves. For this generation of kids and their millennial parents, it's not a stretch, said Pearce. Pretend DJ tables are just as commonly sold in toy aisles as construction trucks.

In the fall, Pearce and his baby raves will return to the U.S. — and, yes, to L.A. — in a 30-city tour. As a solo artist, he's done what he couldn't do in a band — he's broken through to the U.S. and international audiences.

"It's funny, isn't it?" said Pearce. "I always felt like I

had something to say, but no one really listened."

But are techno parties OK for kids?

The roots of techno — in Detroit or Berlin depending on whom you talk to — were always antiestablishment, said Ambrus Deak, program manager of music production at the Los Angeles Film School.

"It was exploratory," said Deak, a longtime DJ who went by DJ AMB, about techno.

Toddler techno plays with that contrast — an edgy genre made safe for kids. Deak would not attend a baby rave — "It would be very cringe for me," he said — but sees the appeal.

"I can definitely see a lot of people being into it," said Deak, 48.

Still, not everyone is sold on the idea of taking kids to a rave — even one held in the middle of the day with a face-painting station.

In the comments of

Pearce's social media posts, parents occasionally debate the appropriateness of exposing kids to drug-addled rave culture.

"I know that most people would say, 'Is this the image we want to teach our kids?'" said Pearce. "What image are you imagining? Because if you think about it, they're just kids with light sticks, right?"

He gets the concern, but kids don't know about the darker sides of raves unless they are taught. And that's not what his baby raves are about.

In the right dose, some experts say techno music and baby raves can be beneficial for kids and parents.

"Parents' happiness and stress regulation also matter," said Jenna Marcovitz, director of the UCLA Health Music Therapy program. "Techno can promote oxytocin and boost endorphins. It can encourage joy and play and really support brain development, emotional regulation and really enhance

the parent-child bond as well."

At the Roxy, one man vigorously pumped his fist to the beat of the music.

"Fist pump like this!" he shouted to the child on his shoulders. Both fists — little and big — jabbed the air.

How to keep it safe and sane

Everything — especially baby raves — should be enjoyed in moderation. The pulsating music, giant inflatables tossed into the crowd and sudden blasts of fog can overstimulate kids.

For the roughly one-hour show, the music is loud. Typically set to 85 to 90 decibels, Pearce said. Having a sensory support plan is key, said Marcovitz, who recommends toddlers wear headphones with a noise reduction rating of 20 to 30 decibels or higher. Practicing dance parties at home, so your child knows what to expect, is also helpful.

At the rave, look for signs of overstimulation, which can present differently with each child — some might shut down while others might start shoving each other mosh pit-style. At the Roxy show, one toddler sat down, ate half a bag of Goldfish crackers and poured the rest on the floor. Another disappeared into the crowd for a few alarming moments before being returned by a good Samaritan.

"For any child, I would recommend breaks every 30 minutes," said Marcovitz. "Step outside."

Because techno hypes people up — even little kids — it's important to help a child regulate their nervous system back down after the show.

"Lots of cuddles, silence and hugs," said Marcovitz.

Pearce also starts the party late, so the dance party before the rave can tucker kids out before he takes the stage.

Ashley and Todd Herles drove from Santa Clarita to the Roxy so their son, Oliver, 3, could meet Pearce before the show. They said they bought \$120 VIP tickets, which included a meet and greet and table seats where Oliver got to high-five Kuma, Pearce's dancing sidekick in a turquoise monkey suit. For Pearce's Nov. 23 show at the Novo in downtown Los Angeles, ticket prices currently range from \$48 to \$195, fees and taxes included.

Overall, Oliver loved it — until he didn't.

"[The] meltdown happened around 1:40 so we left then," said Ashley, 40.

They had big post-rave plans to refuel with French fries. But Oliver was tired.

And, most importantly? "Our backs hurt," said Ashley.

Foreign medical residents in U.S. are running into visa issues

BY ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AND DEVI SHASTRI

Some hospitals in the U.S. are without essential staff because international doctors who were set to start their medical training were delayed by the Trump administration's travel and visa restrictions.

It's unclear exactly how many foreign medical residents were unable to start their assignments. But six medical residents inter-

from Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in New York, which has medical residents from almost every continent. Most received their visas before the pause but a few were caught up in delays.

Two residents from India who spoke on condition of anonymity have not been able to get an appointment at any U.S. embassies there despite the J-1 visa pause being lifted.

Another resident from Egypt just secured a visa ap-

interview.

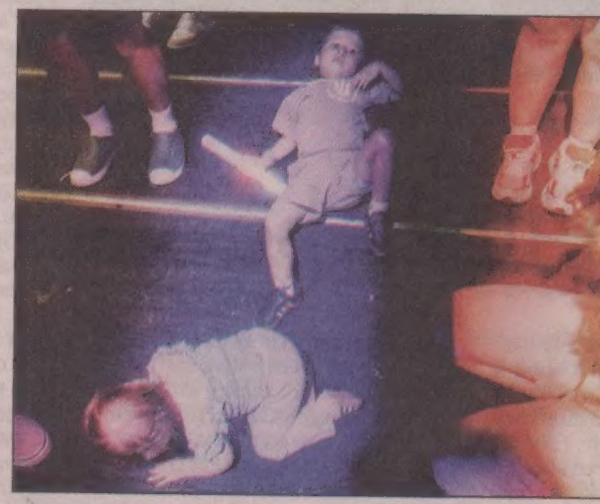
"We are not going to breathe easy until he's here in our hospital," the second leader said.

As of Wednesday, Lamb's matching program had received fewer than 20 requests to defer or cancel residency contracts.

Worried about losing their spots if they defer, many foreign medical residents may keep trying to get to the U.S. and start their residencies late, said Dr. Sabeen Karuppiah, a past



Photographs by ELIZABETH WEINBERG For The Times



SCENES from a recent electronic dance party for children, dubbed baby rave, at the Roxy in West Hollywood. At the event, children were given glow sticks and grooved along to EDM remixes of classic nursery rhymes.

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In the comments of



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MIDDLE EAST

CEASEFIRE DECLARED AFTER IRAN STRIKES

DISPLAY
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A soldier walks through the rubble of a building after a ballistic missile fired from Iran struck Tel Aviv, Israel, on Monday. Iran and Israel have continued to exchange aerial attacks in the days after the United States bombed several Iranian nuclear sites. AMIR LEVY — GETTY IMAGES

Missiles fired on U.S. base in Qatar before Trump says Iran and Israel agree to deal

By David Rising, Jon Gambrell and Melanie Lidman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — U.S. President Donald Trump said that Israel and Iran had agreed to a "complete and total ceasefire" soon after Iran launched a limited missile attack Monday on a U.S. military base in Qatar, retaliating for the American bombing of its nuclear sites.

Iran's foreign minister said that as long as Israel stopped its attacks by 4 a.m. local Tehran time today, Iran would halt its own. But Israel's military warned its public today that Iran had launched missiles toward it near an hour after that time.

Sirens sounded in areas of Israel ahead of the missile barrage's arrival.

It's unclear what the detected missile launch would do for the ceasefire's timeline.

Israel did not immediately acknowledge any ceasefire, but there were no reports of Israeli strikes in Iran after 4 a.m. local. Heavy Israeli strikes continued in Tehran and other cities until

See IRAN on Page A9

MIDDLE EAST

Attacks spin web of emotions for local Iranian Americans

By Jonathan Horwitz, Lillian Ashworth, Hanna Kang and Michael Slaten
STAFF WRITERS

It was business as usual on Monday at Mission Ranch Market, a Persian grocery store in Mission Viejo, the checkout lines long at the lunch hour with shoppers hauling full carts of produce, sheets of lavash bread folded neatly in the crooks of their arms.

Camouflaged by the routine, many Iranian American shoppers moved through the straight aisles with

See LOCAL on Page A9



Civilians retrieve personal belongings after a missile fired from Iran struck in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Monday. AMIR LEVY — GETTY IMAGES

MILITARY

House Dems back Congress on war powers

By Linh Tat
LTAT@SCNG.COM

As tensions between the U.S. and Iran continue, a dozen House Democrats, who are all veterans, sent a letter to President Donald Trump on Monday imploring the president to involve both Congress and the American public more in conversations before any further military escalations.

The lawmakers said they were

See POWERS on Page A9

LONG BEACH

Audit: Efficient way to track spending on streets needed

By Kristy Hutchings
KHUTCHINGS@SCNG.COM

Though Long Beach is making historic investments in infrastructure with its nearly \$800 million Elevate '28 five-year plan, the city needs a more

The report, released by City Auditor Laura Doud's office in May, specifically focused on evaluating Long Beach's investments on street capital improvement projects.

Every two years, Long Beach develops a pavement management plan, which essentially

BRENTWOOD



COURTESY OF LAPD

LAPD sergeant, motorist killed

An officer and motorist were

IMMIGRATION RAIDS

State bill would require officers to display IDs

By Steve Scauzillo
SSCAUZILLO@SCNG.COM

Masked, anonymous persons who have apprehended Latino residents from across Southern California bus stops, parks and shopping centers might include those impersonating immi-

Inside: What to know about debate over protesters and ICE agents wearing masks amid immigration raids. PAGE A14

Monday asked for new laws to increase transparency and weed out any vigilante activity. Senate Bill 805, the No Vigil-

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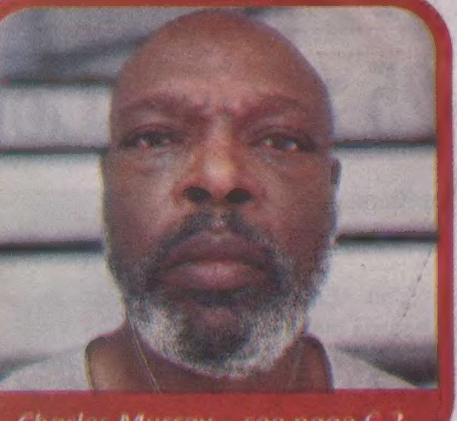
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Charles Murray - see page C-2

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"For Over Ninety Years The Voice of Our Community Speaking for Itself"

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025

Sentinel Writers Named as Finalists in L.A. Press Club Journalism Awards



Attending the awards dinner were, from left, Executive Editor Danny J. Bakewell Jr., Contributing Writers Keith Underwood, Shelby Stephens and Brian Carter, and Managing Editor Cora Jackson-Fossett.

BY CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Managing Editor

News stories by L.A. Sentinel Contributing Writers Brian Carter, Myko Lyric, and Keith Underwood were selected as finalists in the 67th Journalism Awards sponsored by the Los Angeles Press Club on June 22.

The writers landed the coveted spots for produc-



COURTESY PHOTO
Contributing Writer
Myko Lyric

ing compelling articles printed in the Sentinel during 2024. Their stories were recognized out of the thousands of entries submitted by local news outlets.

"Congratulations to Brian, Myko and Keith for this great achievement," said Sentinel Executive Editor Danny J. Bakewell, *{See JOURNALISM AWARDS on B-7}*

'We Ain't Going Nowhere' - Black Immigrants

Left Out of California's Deportation Protests

BY NATHAN J. LEE
Contributing Writer

Black immigrants in California are being left out of the deportation protest conversations. While headlines focus on Latin American migration, advocates warn that anti-Black immigration policies are quietly removing Californians of African descent from their homes, and from the national spotlight.

"We need to tell all the sides of the story," says Nana Gyamfi, executive director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration.

Black immigrants live at the intersection of Black identity and immigration in America, experiencing the combined weight of racial



Nana Gyamfi, Executive Director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration.

Over 200,000 Black immigrants live in California, with more than 74,000 in Los Angeles County.

Ethiopia, countries similarly affected by past or proposed U.S. travel bans, including Proclamation 10040. President Trump's



Kevin Cosney, Associate Director and Co-founder of California Black Power Network.

from 12 nations, eight of which are African countries.

The disproportionate targeting of Black immigrants is not incidental, says

director and co-founder of California Black Power Network.

"Black immigrants make up about 8% of the

20% of deportations. We see this clearly not just as an attack on immigration, but an advancement and a push for white supremacy to not make America great again but make America white again."

In its report "The State of Black Immigrants," BAJI found that 76% of Black immigrants facing deportation are targeted due to contact with law enforcement, not immigration violations. Like other Black Americans, they experience over-sentencing and the broader injustices of the U.S. criminal justice system.

"That happens driving while Black, walking while Black," Gyamfi explains. "All of the racial profiling of Black people that we know."

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